

Theresa Dumond
Lakes Region Recovery Center / CourageLives
LD 1435

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, And members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for taking the time to hear testimony on this important bill. My name is Theresa Dumond, I live in Denmark Maine. I am writing today to ask you to support LDs 1435 an act to Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation and LDs 1436 an act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation. I have gone to jail many times for petty crimes that I did well under my pimps or buyers' rule, I would do anything to feed my addiction at that time. I did three years in prison for a man that I was afraid of I felt safer in a jail cell then I did ratting on the man I was abused by. I want nothing more for my sister survivors to have a safe way out. I never understood why only females were being arrested for this and charged what about the men that are making us do this. I'm a firm believer if we didn't have buyers and sellers then we wouldn't have this issue. But because that's not reality we need to start penalizing the people that are taking advantage of women in vulnerable states. after years of looking for support, I finally found a group of women that helped me pull myself out of that lifestyle. Not only do we need to hold the buyers and sellers accountable we need for these women to have resources to get out of that lifestyle. Today I work as a nationwide speaker for human trafficking and as a recovery coach at lakes regions recovery center. I see women that have had to fight the same lifestyle I have, and their crimes also follow them. I myself have felonies that have followed me throughout my healing journey. I can't leave this country and advocate for other women that have gone through this because of the charges I have taken for men that used me. It's time to break the stigma it's no longer just prostitution this is exploitation nobody woke up and said this is what I want to do for a job. Thank you for listening to my testimony and I hope my words came through and you will also support both bills.